

CONTENTS

Articles

Nicolas Dejenne & Eve Tignol 191–204

Introduction au numéro spécial « Expressions de la *bhakti* dans les littératures indiennes »

Amandine Wattelier-Bricout 205–219

La dimension dévotionnelle du *Skandayāga* : *Atharvavedapariśiṣṭa* XX sur le rituel en l'honneur de *Dhūrta*

The present article provides a new assessment of the ritual dedicated to Skanda, the *Skandayāga* or *Dhūrtakalpa*, which is described in the chapter XX of the *Pariśiṣṭas* of the *Atharvaveda*. First it gives a brief survey of the previous points of view on this text, which understand it as a ritual performed by thieves to honour a malevolent deity. Although these interpretations associated Skanda with his devotees, the devotional aspect of this ritual had not yet been highlighted. The analysis of the hymns dedicated to Skanda reveals that there is an interpersonal relationship between Skanda and the sacrificer who honours him, that the deity is praised as a warrior and martial god and that the aims of the ritual are absolutely not fraudulent acquirements: the devotee wants to gain a powerful status amongst the other devotees and to obtain release and immortality. On this basis, the different arguments of the previous studies which claimed Skanda is the god of thieves through the epithet *Dhūrta* are reassessed. A philological analysis shows it is possible to understand the epithet in a different manner. This new identification of the god, the aims of the ritual and the use of an amulet allow to determine the status of Skanda's devotees: they belong to the ruling class. Hence the *Skandayāga* provides evidence of the emergence of a devotional current within the Atharvavedic environment and the ruling classes.

KEYWORDS

Pariśiṣṭa | Skanda | *bhakti* | amulet | *Atharvaveda*

Françoise 'Nalini' Delvoye 221–242

Poèmes lyriques d'inspiration dévotionnelle attribués à Mīyān Tānsen, premier musicien de la cour de l'empereur moghol Akbar (r. 1556–1605)

This article discusses the literary production attributed to Mīyān Tānsen of Gwalior, who became first court musician of Mughal emperor Akbar in 1562, until his death in 1589. The very diverse literary patronage, which the famous poet-composer-interpreter enjoyed,

explains the thematic wealth of the lyrical poems called *dhrupad* in Madhyadeśīya and Braj chanted in a poetic and musical genre, that emerged in Gujarat and in the Gwalior region at the end of the 15th century. Relying on oral transmission, the manuscript, lithographic and printed anthologies containing *dhrupads* attributed to Tānsen include a number of poems inspired by Hindu and Sufi devotional traditions. A large part of those poems was later transmitted by singers of the imperial court to Gujarat and Bengal, as the anthologies published from the middle of the 19th century show. Others were appropriated by sectarian Krishnaite movements, which included them in their liturgical repertoire. This article discusses a selection of the lyrical poems addressed to Hindu gods (Gaṇeśa, Sarasvatī, Śiva, Hari, Viṣṇu Nārāyaṇa and especially Kṛṣṇa) but also to Allah and great Sufi masters, all characterized by strong devotional sentiments, and underlines the impact of the theme, patronage and performance on the choice of language and vocabulary. Amongst the most remarkable examples of the fluidity of the genre, poems of a *bhakti* nature with Arabo-Persian vocabulary and devotional Sanskritized *dhrupads* inspired by Puranic traditions addressed to Akbar will be considered.

KEYWORDS

Hindustani music | Tānsen | Akbar | Braj | *dhrupad* | Kṛṣṇa

Anne Murphy

243–268

At a Sufi-Bhakti Crossroads: Gender and the Politics of Satire in Early Modern Punjabi Literature

This essay examines intersections between Sufi and *bhakti* domains, moving beyond notions of “syncretism” and “influence” to understand chosen and concurrent common expressions and approaches to social formations. The focus is on gender, which offers a particularly powerful connecting point between *bhakti* and Sufi systems of thought and critique, connected to discourses around other social formations (such as caste). This is explored through an examination of gender within Waris Shah’s *Hīr*, a mid-eighteenth-century Punjabi language text that enjoys a high status among Punjabi language communities across the India/Pakistan border, and beyond. It is argued that the satirical treatment of gender, alongside caste, provides a striking connection point among Sufi and Bhakti traditions that does not function in simply or solely liberatory terms, but which both reinforces and calls into question the inequalities and hierarchical systems associated with these social formations.

KEYWORDS

Sufism | *bhakti* | gender | satire | Punjabi

Les métaphores du *nirguṇ* : entre poésie chantée de bhakti et tradition orale

This article discusses the exchanges between “worldly” oral tradition and vernacular religious poetry in north India, especially from the *Sant* poets. It deals with the link between literature and *bhakti* on the basis of the *nirguṇ*, emphasising the oral and sung nature of *bhakti* poetry, and it shows how songs and poems in the *nirguṇ* mode share elements with *gaunā* songs which belong to the rites of marriage. The article further describes how these themes appear in bhakti traditions in the Hindu diaspora communities of Mauritius and Fiji. Looking at the links between *nirguṇ* and *gaunā* songs highlights the fluid frontiers between poetry and oral tradition and suggests a blurring of gender/genre lines, which offers an escape from the gendered perspective of marriage rites.

KEYWORDS

bhakti | *nirguṇ* | Bhojpuri | *gauna* | oral tradition | poetry

Recherche de la Déesse, recherche esthétique, recherche de soi : les formes de la *bhakti* dans l'œuvre de Lālkuṭi Captariṣi Rāmāmirutam

Lālkuṭi Captariṣi Rāmāmirutam, commonly known as La.Sa.Ra (1916–2007), is a towering figure in the history of modern Tamil literature. This *smārta* Brahmin, much influenced by Anglo-Saxon literature, is the author of a voluminous work famous for its formal originality, introspectiveness and mysticism. La.Sa.Ra sees literary creation as a spiritual exercise – both a celebration of Ampāl, his lineage goddess, and a search for himself. *Bhakti* thus constitutes the main thread of his work: the Goddess is the author's inspiring muse and also his ideal. Ampāl figures the highest form of beauty, an image of the Absolute and the symbol of his family, which boasts about having some great mystics among their ancestors. We study some representative excerpts from “lasarian” writing (short stories and articles) to show how *bhakti* unites La.Sa.Ra's quests for beauty, spiritual truth and identity. The literary cult of Ampāl first forms the basis upon which La.Sa.Ra builds his Hindu aesthetics, inspired both by Śaṅkara and English modernist fiction. *Bhakti* also sustains the author's traditionalist thought, which glorifies his own family, the Brahmin family in general and even more broadly, the culture of the *smārta* Brahmins.

KEYWORDS

Lā.Ca.Rāmāmirutam | Tamil | literature | *bhakti* | Goddess

Book Reviews

Daniel Schwemer. *The Anti-Witchcraft Ritual Maqlû. The Cuneiform Sources of a Magic Ceremony from Ancient Mesopotamia.*

(*Silvia Salin*)

323–324

Emanuel Beška. *From Ambivalence to Hostility:
The Arabic Newspaper Filastīn and Zionism, 1911–1914*

(*Alex Winder*)

325–326

Our Contributors

327–329